

**Ground Rules and Committee Decision-Making Model  
for the  
Committee on Best Practices  
in  
Northampton Decision Making (Best Practices Committee)**

**Ground Rules**

1. Only one person speaks at a time; no one will interrupt while someone is speaking.
2. Each person expresses their own views, rather than speaking for others at the table or attributing motives to them.
3. Avoid grandstanding (i.e., extended comments/speaking), so that every one has a fair chance to speak.
4. No personal attacks. Challenge ideas, not people.
5. Everybody agrees to make a strong effort to stay on track with the agenda and to move the deliberations forward.
6. Everybody will seek to focus on the merits of what is being said, making a good faith effort to understand the concerns of others. Questions of clarification are encouraged. Disparaging comments are discouraged.
7. Everybody will follow the "no surprises" rule. Concerns should be voiced when they arise, not later in the deliberations when a "surprise" objection is raised.
8. Each person will seek to identify options or proposals that represent shared interests, without minimizing legitimate disagreements. Each person agrees to do their best to take account of the interests of the group as a whole.
9. Each person reserves the right to disagree with any proposal and accepts responsibility for offering alternatives that accommodates their interests and the interests of others.
10. Each person who speaks to the media will speak only about their views. No member will speak on behalf of the group as a whole, without permission of the group as a whole.